

## Chicago

At the end of my term as Director, when everything was all set and operating smoothly, I was asked if I would be willing to go to help out in Chicago. It seemed that they had several jobs for me there, and I was now sure that though Mother's health was going downhill, she was stable for the present. I could be away without any trouble and be able to keep out of mischief and be useful at the same time. This would be going from one extreme to the other for at Leeds Terrace we had only seven old Brothers, all retired, whereas the Chicago community was about eighteen Brothers. Fortunately enough for me, the work that I would be doing was quite diversified, and I would have contact with students for two aspects of the four jobs offered to me.

First of all I was to be in charge of checking on the company taking care of the full cleaning of our buildings. They would do their cleaning during the night, and I would check on that work in the early morning before the start of the classes. I would rise early enough to make a thorough checkup on the cleanliness of each building and prepare a detailed report on what was done, what was neglected, and what I was advising them to do to keep on task. A full copy of my report was handed to the company with a copy on the principal's desk first thing in the morning, with a copy for my records and one for the Director of the community. This involved the monastery, school buildings, gymnasiums, and all the hallways as well. I would praise when the work was well done and criticize when it was not up to par or had been forgotten. I had the supervisor come to a meeting regularly each week or as needed on some special occasions when something was urgent. Before school started, I had reports on the desks of those concerned.

My second job was with the students who were preparing to graduate and were expected to take part in an annual senior service program where some work had to be done for the poor and needy of the area. This Senior Service Program involved all the graduate classes that were to have credit for the weekly program of service for the needy. We were associated with the Chicago Welfare Service and were to get food available at low cost to the needy of the city. The food was donated, and the slight charge on the goods was to offset our travel expenses for trucking these goods to the school and making them available to the needy of the area. We had special areas of the school where the needy would come once a week for the food. The program was operated by the seniors exclusively under my supervision. I had to laugh at the fact that our present-day students could only add well if they used an adding machine, whereas the elderly men and women who came for help had all been trained as I was in mental arithmetic and could figure out their total cost long before the students did. The service was helpful to the poor and a good training in charity for the students.

Another duty that I had was that I was fully in charge of the school bookstore. While I was in charge of the bookstore I was able to interest the students in helping the missions by putting their pennies or small change in a jug for the missions. Eventually the jug would get full, and then I used to have the students contribute five cents for each guess at how much money was in the jug. The five who came closest would get a school shirt or some prize from the bookstore. I was able to continue to get help for the missions, and the Father's Club used to gather once a month on evenings to help the missions. I was kept busy and quite happy.

A number of the Brothers here had been my former Scholastics and were very helpful. One of the young teachers here was from a family I had known well from my Tyngsboro days; we used to walk around the campus track each night and say the rosary together. Today Danny Patenaude is well married and both of them have positions in a school. I was delighted when they asked me to attend and to speak at their wedding.

While in Chicago I received a letter from our Major Superiors in Rome asking me to please go to a funeral in Louisiana for the burial of Father Joseph Buckley, who had been Superior General of the Marist Fathers while I was in Rome. I had known him quite well, and he had been one of the two men who had greatest influence on all the Bishops and Superiors attending the Vatican Council in Rome.

It was also at this time that I had to go to Worcester to check on my mother, who had gone down considerably. My family was anxious for me to intervene and have her go into a nursing home where she would get the proper care. She was quickly convinced and said that she would go to any nursing home that I would select for her. In Worcester I went to the Bishop and explained the situation. Mother needed to be admitted to a nursing home,

and all of them had long waiting lists. He made a call or two and in no time was given the assurance that the next empty bed would be for Mother. I went to inspect the home and to talk with the Sisters in charge, and was happy that the Superior meant business and would keep her promise. I returned to Chicago, and three days later I had a call from my sisters assuring me that Mother was in the home and very happy about the choice.

My years in Chicago had been most pleasant and fruitful, but when the Superiors asked me to accept a different job in Lawrence once again, I was happy to do so for that would bring me closer to Mother in her old age. I was to go back to New England.